

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 18-22 and 27 were allowed, claims 4, 11-17 and 24-26 were objected to, and the claims 1-3, 5-10 and 23 were rejected. Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 18-22 and 27 and for indicating the allowability of claims 4, 11-17 and 24-26 if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the corresponding base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Reply and Amendment, claims 1, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 24 and 25 have been amended, claims 6 and 23 have been canceled without prejudice, and claims 1-5, 7-22 and 24-27 remain pending in the present application. Each of claims 17 and 25 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims from which it depends. Accordingly, claims 17 and 25 along with their dependent claims should be in condition for allowance. All claim amendments are fully supported throughout the description and figures of the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-3, 5-10 and 23 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the UK publication of Talbot, UK Patent Application GB2320984A. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, however independent claims 6 and 23 have been canceled without prejudice, and claim 1 has been amended to clarify aspects of the claim language. Allowable, dependent claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the language of original independent claim 6, and claims 7-10 now ultimately depend from claim 17. Similarly, allowable, dependent claim 25 has been amended to incorporate the language of original independent claim 23.

With respect to amended claim 1, the Talbot reference fails to disclose or suggest elements of the subject claim. The Talbot reference generally describes a system designed to protect electrical circuits from reverse currents. A fuse device 20 has two conductive links 32, 38 with the link 38 including a fusing section 56 designed to increase in temperature significantly faster than the rest of the link. A layer of combustible material 58 is deposited so the central portion of link 32 and the fusing section 56 of link 38 lie on top of the combustible

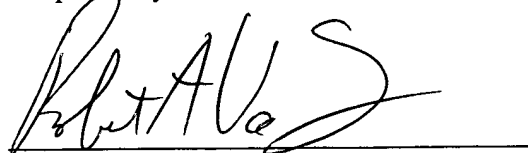
material. If a reverse current begins to flow with sufficient reverse voltage for sufficient time, the temperature of the fusing section 56 ignites combustible material 58. The combustion not only breaks fusing section 56 but also first link 32 and cuts off all current flow. (See page 4, line 4, through page 5, line 11).

The Talbot reference, however, does not teach or suggest an isolation system that uses reverse-polarity current to isolate electrical devices. For example, the reference does not describe or suggest a switch movable to a second position to supply "reverse-polarity current for blowing the fuse and disconnecting an electrical device" and movable back to a first position "to provide power to the remaining electrical devices" as recited in amended, independent claim 1. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference.

Claims 2, 3 and 5 depend from independent claim 1. Accordingly, these dependent claims are patentable over the cited reference for the reasons provided above with respect to independent claim 1 as well as for unique subject matter recited in each of these dependent claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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